Department of Community Services

Annual Accountability Report
Fiscal Year 2004-2005

Building strong, healthy communities together

NOVA SCOTIA
Community Services

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1.0 ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The accountability report of the Department of Community Services for the year ended March 31, 2005, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against Community Services business plan information for the fiscal year 2004-2005. The reporting of Community Services outcomes necessarily includes estimates, and judgements and opinions by the department's management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of the management of Community Services. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the department's business plan for the year.

Marian F. Tyson, Q.C.
Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services

David M. Morse
Minister, Department of Community Services

106-03800/

2.0 MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am pleased to present this accountability report as a summary of the activities of our department, as a follow up to our 2004-2005 Business Plan. It has been a busy and productive year, and a number of significant activities were initiated or completed during this time.

Community Services provides a wide range of supports to families and individual across Nova Scotia. Key program areas are housing, income assistance, employment supports, services for persons with disabilities and programs for children and families. Collective efforts were focused on the strategic goals of the department, working toward improving programs and services for clients, as well as improving the way we deliver those services.

This report provides an overview of these activities, including how we measure our success and the outcomes for the people we serve. Our mission is to promote greater independence, self-reliance and security for Nova Scotians in need, and this report outlines our progress to date, and is a valuable tool in our efforts to constantly provide the best service possible.

I hope you find this information both interesting and useful.

Sincerely,

David M. Morse
Minister, Department of Community Services

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The Annual Accountability Report for the Department of Community Services reports on the progress achieved by the department towards the goals, priorities, performance measures and financial targets established in our 2004-2005 Business Plan. The 2004-2005 Business Plan is on the Department of Community Services website at http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/publications.html.

In establishing its priorities, the department was guided by its mission statement and strategic goals:

We are committed to promoting the independence, self-reliance, security and well being of the people we serve.

- *Individuals and families are self-sufficient and are able to support themselves.*
- *Children, youth and persons with disabilities are protected and supported within families and communities that promote their healthy development.*
- *Nova Scotians are assisted in obtaining safe, affordable, appropriate and sustainable housing.*
- *Services are provided in an efficient and accountable manner through effective service delivery.*

The information that follows outlines the department's progress and accomplishments against the priorities identified in the 2004-2005 Business Plan. The report then provides a summary of the financial results for fiscal year 2004-2005, as well as details regarding performance measures and the results achieved.

4.0 PRIORITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following is a summary of the progress and accomplishments of the Department of Community Services in achieving its 2004-2005 Business Plan priorities. The priorities are organized according to Community Services' strategic goals and build on the department's efforts to create a more horizontal and integrated approach to program development and delivery.

4.1 Strategic Goal: Individuals and families are self-sufficient and are able to support themselves.

Priority:

To conduct an evaluation of the Employment Support Services component of the Employment Supports and Income Assistance Program. The goal is to ensure that appropriate, affordable and responsive services are available to meet the changing needs of clients, and that these services enable clients to increase their level of employability and their ability to support themselves.

Accomplishment:

The Department of Community Services is responsible for the delivery of Employment Support and Income Assistance to Nova Scotians in need. The *Employment Support and Income Assistance Evaluation Framework* was completed in 2004 as a management tool to assist program managers, staff and evaluators in preparing evaluation studies of the ESIA Program. The first evaluation focuses on the Employment Support Services Program and will be carried out in 2005-06.

Priority:

To review and redesign the Child Care Subsidy Program. The goal is to ensure maximum utilization of the existing subsidies for child care spaces and ensure movement of subsidized child care to where it is most needed.

Accomplishment:

A Child Care Subsidy Program Review Working Group consisting of departmental staff and child care sector representatives was established. The first phase of the review resulted in an increase in child care subsidies for low income families. The new rates are stepped to reflect the

higher cost of caring for younger children, and replace the former flat rate. The increase in daily subsidies range from $1.30 to $4.30 per day. The new rates were effective January 1, 2005.

Per Diem Rates for the Child Care Subsidy Program

Type of Child Care	Prior Rates	Effective January '05	($) Increase	(%) Increase
Infants	$17.70	$22	$4.30	24%
Toddlers	$17.70	$20	$2.30	13%
Preschool	$17.70	$19	$1.30	7%
School Age	$17.70	$17.70	$0	0%

The department has also increased the number of subsidized spaces in 2004-2005. Fifty new portable subsidies were created, bringing the total number of subsidized spaces to 2,756.

The Review will continue and include the development of recommendations for a revised grant funding structure for child-care centres, and the review of eligible income levels. In the interim, a $200,000 grant was distributed among licensed full-day centres providing subsidized childcare.

4.2 Strategic Goal: Children, youth and persons with disabilities are protected and supported within families and communities that promote their healthy development.

Priority:

Redesign the department's domestic adoption services. The goal of the redesign is to develop an adoption program which helps families who want to adopt a child, so that children in care have a greater opportunity to live with a family in a stable home environment.

Accomplishment:

Work began on this initiative in 2003-2004 with a review of adoption legislation and programs across the country. In 2004-2005, options for changes to the current system were developed and consultations with existing service delivery agencies and stakeholders were undertaken. As a result, 10 positions were approved to respond to inquiries, conduct information sessions for adoption applicants, screen applicants, provide pre-service adoption training and conduct adoption home studies.

The department continues to work on this initiative, exploring ways to recruit more adoptive parents and implement legislative amendments to increase the opportunity for children in care and custody to be adopted.

Priority:

Support the speech and cognitive development of children through the expansion of the new Early Language and Learning Program.

Accomplishment:

In 2004-2005, the department provided an additional $160,000 to family resource centres for an Early Language and Learning Program. These funds were used to:

- obtain an additional speech-language pathologist, who, provides training and consultation to the host family resource centre and other early childhood development programs
- to provide local grants to three more family resource centres to support program development and delivery
- to provide enhanced outreach capacity to four family resource centres currently delivering the program.

Priority:

Support parents and care givers by providing information on child care options, parent education, and other support services available in their community through the expansion of the new Child-Care Information and Support Program.

Accomplishment:

In 2004-2005, the department provided an additional $200,000 to early childhood development resource centres for the Child Care Information and Support Program. These funds allowed for the establishment of an additional four programs, for a total of 14 programs across the province. Child Care Information and Support Programs are designed to enhance and improve the quality and accessibility of a range of child care options for families through opportunities for parents and caregivers to receive training, information and support.

Priority:

Work in partnership with family resource centres to continue to develop and support volunteer programs ranging from youth to seniors and expand parent education programs provided through Resource Centres.

Accomplishment:

In partnership with the family resource sector, the department launched a volunteer initiative to increase involvement of volunteers in family resource centres (FRC), ranging from youth to seniors. Approximately $20,000 was invested in this initiative in 2004-2005. Specifically, funding was used to:

- host a provincial workshop for FRC, the department and other relevant stakeholders
- purchase volunteer management resources for FRC
- provide eight "Building Futures Together" grants for twelve FRC (totaling approximately $12,000.)
- recognize FRC volunteers during National Volunteer Week.

A preliminary comparison of baseline results of the number of volunteers in 2003-2004 and FRC estimations in March 2005 indicates an increase of approximately 20%. In 2005-2006, efforts will be focused on developing promotional materials and a training strategy in volunteer management to further support FRCs in enhancing their volunteer programs.

A Parent Education Provincial Advisory Committee consisting of department staff, family resource centre representatives and other specialists was also established to increase access to quality parent education programs in Nova Scotia by helping the department develop a parent education framework and corresponding training strategy.

Priority:

Promote physical activity in young children by providing child-care centres with additional funds for the purchase of materials and equipment.

Accomplishment:

Over $700,000 in funding was provided to promote physical activity in licensed child-care centres operating part-day programs. The funding was used to buy materials and resources that help increase children's activity such as music, dance and movement videos, skipping ropes,

balls and tricycles. Centres were also provided with information such as *Active Living for Early Childhood*, to help incorporate physical activity into day-to-day programming for children.

Priority:

Provide increased opportunities for children with special needs to participate in and benefit from child-care programs by focusing on inclusion strategies.

Accomplishment:

A Partnership for Inclusion grant of $300,000 was made available to licensed child-care centres to help children with special needs receive responsive childcare. The Partnership for Inclusion Program is currently in effect in 78 licensed child-care centres.

Priority:

Support parents with children under 3 years of age by enhancing the Healthy Beginnings Home Visiting Program, incorporating community-based home visitors to reach more families in need.

Accomplishment:

The Healthy Beginnings Enhanced Home Visiting Program focuses on promoting a healthy parent-child relationship, fostering healthy childhood development, and linking families with community resources that further enhance opportunities for the healthy growth and development of the baby and family as a whole.

In 2004-2005, the Department of Health, as the lead, added the role of a community home visitor to the program and it was implemented in some areas of the province. Provincial program standards and an evaluation framework were also developed. Province-wide implementation is scheduled for 2005-06.

Priority:

Review the consultant's report on the governance of the Child Welfare System and consult with stakeholders to inform the decision making process. The goal is to ensure that child welfare services are structured to best meet the needs of children today and are sustainable well into the future.

Accomplishment:

In 2003-2004, consultants were retained to do a comprehensive review of the governance and business model of the Child Welfare System. The objective was, and continues to be, to develop a comprehensive governance and accountability framework which includes clearly established roles and responsibilities, fiscal and outcome accountability, and common operational practices.

In 2004-2005, the department reviewed and evaluated the report, consulted with stakeholders, and staff began developing recommendations for an improved system. Work commenced on four projects aimed at strengthening the child welfare delivery system including: child and youth placement, a child protection on-call system, coordination of adoption and foster services, and opportunities for shared services.

Priority:

To complete the development and begin implementation of a renewed program model for the Services for Persons with Disabilities Program[1]. The goal is to have a modern, equitable, responsive and sustainable residential/vocational support system that will help ensure persons with disabilities are healthy and safe, and have opportunities to participate as citizens in their communities.

Accomplishment:

In January 2005, a new Direct Family Support Program was implemented as a part of the Services for Persons with Disabilities Renewal Project. The program provides assistance to families caring for a disabled family member at home.

Work also began on the development/ enhancement of two other programs:

- Alternative Family Support, a program similar to foster care, which provides financial assistance to care givers who look after people with disabilities.
- Independent Living Support Program[2] offers support to clients with disabilities, who live in their home. Support in carrying out daily living activities such as

[1] In 2004-2005, the Community Supports for Adults Program was changed to Services for Persons with Disabilities Program to provide a continuum of support from child to adulthood.

[2] Previously called the Supported Apartments Program.

budgeting, making appointments, etc. will be provided. This program allows people to remain as independent and self-reliant as possible.

These two programs are scheduled for implementation in the 2005-06 fiscal year.

4.3 Strategic Goal: Nova Scotians are assisted in obtaining safe, affordable, appropriate and sustainable housing.

Priority:

To continue to implement the Affordable Housing Program.

Accomplishment:

In 2004-2005, 178 new rental housing units were approved:

- Sydney Mines (20 units for seniors and non-elderly singles)
- Halifax (66 units for seniors)
- Truro (24 units for singles, families and seniors)
- Westville (4 units for persons with disabilities)
- New Minas (24 units for seniors)
- Debert (24 units for singles, families and seniors)
- Chester (16 units for seniors)

In addition, 72 low income households received assistance under the Home Preservation Program.

In December 2004, a request for proposals (RFP) was released for the development of 250 additional new rental housing projects, resulting in 46 proposals. The remainder of Phase 1 funding ($20.16 M) will be fully committed by the end of fiscal year 2005-2006.

On March 3, 2005, the department signed a new agreement with the Government of Canada for Phase II of the Affordable Housing Agreement, worth $18.9 million. This will bring the total investment under the Canada-Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program Agreement to $56.18 million by 2008. This investment is being equally shared by the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia and its housing partners.

4.4 Strategic Goal: Services are provided in an efficient and accountable manner through effective service delivery.

The goal is to ensure Nova Scotians have timely access to information and staff, and that staff have the information, tools, and training they need to serve their clients. At the same time, Community Services wants to make sure that the department's programs and services are organized to promote efficient and effective service delivery.

Priority:

Improve access to staff by implementing protocols which cover office hours, scheduling at peak times, and telephone and messaging standards.

Accomplishment:

A departmental Client Service Improvement Steering Committee was established to initiate and support client service improvement projects. In 2004-2005, the focus was improving client access to staff. The following service improvements were implemented: rural offices previously closed during lunch time are now open; public telephone listings were simplified, and improvements were made to staff scheduling to cover off peak time periods. Initiatives near completion include telephone and messaging protocols and the implementation of a 1-800 toll-free service.

Priority:

Improving client access to information, by developing and disseminating a series of descriptions of all programs and services.

Accomplishment:

The department has heard from staff, partners and the public that better and more accessible information about our programs and services is needed. In response, the department has implemented several communication initiatives around improving public access to program information. For example, up to date client handbooks and brochures are now available, and a more user friendly website featuring contact and general information about our programs has been developed.

Priority:

Improve staff access to appropriate case information to support timely and informed decisions by beginning implementation of a new Integrated Case Management (ICM) system in one or two program areas.

Accomplishment:

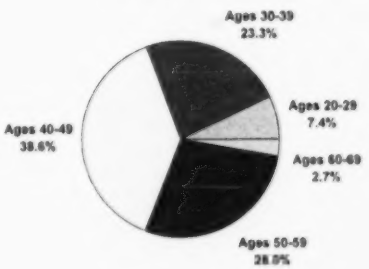
The ICM project is an important multi-year initiative for the department providing enhanced technology support and case management tools. In 2004-2005, the ICM solution was successfully rolled out in the Employment Support Services program area. The new system is currently being used by approximately 500 staff members across the province. Work on the development of tools to support the Direct Family Support Program is well underway.

Priority:

Ensure the department can continue to sustain a knowledgeable competent work force by preparing a Succession Management Plan in conjunction with the Public Service Commission, which will include mechanisms to improve staff retention and recruitment, career plans for all employees, together with a training and development plan.

Age Distribution DCS Staff

(as of April 2005)



Accomplishment:

As a first step in preparing for the development of a Succession Management Plan, the department developed an Individual Training and Development Program and delivered a series of 50 sessions to all departmental staff. This program will help the department identify its training requirements to enable mission fulfillment, and enable staff to acquire the necessary skills to meet current job expectations and to prepare for future career opportunities. The department has developed a succession management process, project charter and project plan. Phase 1 of this plan will be implemented in Community Services in 2005-2006.

Priority:

Complete departmental restructuring and begin the integration process with the development of strategies to take advantage of opportunities for better program and service alignment. As part of this process, a research project will be undertaken to examine the role of Housing Services with respect to providing support to the service provider sector.

Accomplishment:

The departmental restructuring of Head Office was announced in January 2005. The new structure clarifies roles and responsibilities among programs and operations. Head Office roles will concentrate on strategic policy and planning, standards, policy development, compliance, legislation, and program development and analysis. The four regions will focus primarily on service delivery. These changes were made to ensure the department is making the best use of the knowledge and expertise of all staff, and to support staff to be more effective in their respective roles.

An important element of the new structure was the creation of the Program Operation Support Division which was mandated to explain ways to improve the overall efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of program operations and delivery. The filling of the three new director positions in the spring and summer of 2005 enabled the restructuring to commence.

During the restructuring exercise, questions were often raised around the role of the Government in the delivery of housing services. In 2004-2005, the department initiated an important research project on the Role of Government in Housing and the background research has been compiled. It is anticipated that the next phase of this work will involve an evaluation of current programs and a work plan for the development of a report on the Role of Government in Housing.

5.0 OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The department committed $500,000 to the Abilities Foundation of Nova Scotia for a four year Children's Wheelchair Recycling Program. The program provides wheelchairs to children who need a wheel chair for the first time or have outgrown their current chair.

- For the fifth year in a row, the department provided almost $1 million in assistance to help families who receive assistance to buy school supplies. This extra help relieves some of the added financial pressure each new school year brings. About 8,200 students between the ages of five and twelve will receive the funding, along with about 5,300 students over the age of thirteen.

- The department through KidSport Nova Scotia provided funding to low-income families to help children participate in organized sports. In 2004, $330,000 was invested in Kidsport Nova Scotia. The department also worked with Sport Nova Scotia to streamline the application process, addressing another barrier to participation in sport.

- The department provided $100,000 in annual operational funding to the Tri-County Women's Centre, following the end of their federal support. This new funding enabled the centre to continue to offer its broad range of services for women primarily in rural areas. The centre offers support services, information, referrals within the community, and advocacy for women and families.

- Vocational day training programs received a total of $2 million in enhanced funding to assist Nova Scotians with disabilities or barriers to employment achieve their individual goals and improve their quality of life. About $1 million, in one-time grants, went toward infrastructure or capital purchases and improvements for adult service centres and another $1 million to create grants for the province's work activity programs.

6.0 FINANCIAL RESULTS

The department's budget estimate for the fiscal year 2004-2005 was $694.1 million. During the year, government approved additional $11 million in Strategic Funding Initiatives for investment in programs for seniors, low income Nova Scotians, and persons with disabilities. The department realized a $700,000 favourable variance prior to the $11 million approved additional expenditure.

Department of Community Services
Estimated & Actual Expenditures
For the Year Ending March 31, 2005

Operational Area	Estimate 2004-2005 ($thousands)	Actual 2004-2005 ($thousands)	Variance	Notes
Senior Management	1,015.0	1,024.2	(9.2)	
Corporate Service Unit	15,416.0	14,271.5	1,144.5	1
Policy and Information Management	2,657.0	2,046.9	610.1	
Field Offices	8,061.0	7,427.7	633.3	
Services for Persons with Disabilities	165,051.1	169,089.6	(4,038.5)	2
Family and Children's Services	145,744.9	137,912.2	7,832.7	3
Housing Services	13,175.0	32,743.0	(19,568.0)	4
Income Assistance & Employment Support	343,025.0	339,925.0	3,100	5
All Divisions (DCS)	694,145.0	704,440.2	(10,295.2)	
Salaries and Benefits	63,194.4	59,970.6	3,223.8	
Funded Staff (FTE's)	1,132	1,085	47	

Notes to the Estimated & Actual Expenditures
For the Year Ending March 31, 2005

1. $1.1 Million under spent due to favourable variances in Information Technology - lower than anticipated operational services costs and reduced staff/consulting costs due to capitalization of salaries related to the Integrated Case Management System.

2. Over spent by $4.0 Million. $2.3 Million due to implementation of December 2004 Strategic Funding Initiative. Balance due to increased service provider costs (salary and pension benefits).

3. $2.5 Million of the federally funded Early Learning and Child Care was deferred to 2005-2006 due to delays in implementing child care expansion. Balance of the $7.8 Million under spent reflects favourable trend in Maintenance costs for children in care due to declining caseloads and reduced costs per case.

4. $19.6 Million over spent due to decrease in Government of Canada Recoveries, implementation of December 2004 Strategic Funding Initiative, and adjustments to the recoverable from the Deferred Federal Contribution account.

5. $3.1 Million under spent due to favourable variances in Pharmacare and NS Child Benefit Allowance costs.

7.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This section provides detailed information on the outcomes and performance measures for each of the department's core business areas:

- Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Family and Children's Services
- Housing Services
- Employment Support and Income Assistance

Some measures have been refined in the 2005-2006 Business Plan to better reflect the desired outcomes of the department's services and programs. Changes are noted in their respective sections.

7.1 Core Business Area: Services for Persons with Disabilities

Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) is a new core business area, combining the former Community Supports for Adults Program and the Children's In Home Support. This new core business area ensures a continuum of supports from child to adult. The desired outcome remains the same *to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to live healthy, safe and independent lives.*

Performance Measure: Access to a Range of Residential Supports

Access to a range a residential supports is key to positive outcomes for clients of the SPD Program. The needs of children and adults with disabilities vary and, as such, the services they need in order to be independent, safe and healthy in their communities ranges from minimal to intensive. Over the course of the past year, the department has undertaken a number of initiatives to enhance the range of residential supports and to make these supports more accessible.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure provides an indication of the progress made toward improving the continuum of residential support options available to children and adults with disabilities and ensuring this core program is sustainable in the long-term.

Where are we now?

In 2002-2003, Community Services initiated a process for a comprehensive redesign of the Community Supports for Adults Program. The following year, jurisdictions across the country were surveyed to identify the range of supports available in other provinces and their models of delivery. Providers, advocates and clients were engaged in a process to discuss the mandate of the program, the vision, values and the types of services which would enable a greater level of independence.

In March 2004, the department released a discussion paper to obtain public feedback on the development of a sustainable continuum of residential support option for adults with disabilities.

In 2004-2005, the department began implementing changes to strengthen the range of residential support options and to streamline access. As part of a departmental restructuring initiative, residential programs for both children and adults with disabilities were integrated to form the Services for Persons with Disabilities branch. This move fosters seamless access to the full continuum of residential supports, making the transition from childhood to adulthood easier, and enabling greater movement between services for adults.

Also in 2004-2005, a new program called Direct Family Support was implemented. This program provides assistance to families caring for a disabled family member at home.

Work also began on the development/enhancement of two other programs:

- Alternative Family Support provides financial assistance to care givers who provide care and supervision to adults with disabilities in a family setting.

- Independent Living Support Program is for people with disabilities who require minimal supervision or support. This program enables clients to remain as independent and self-reliant as possible.

Where do we want to be?

In 2005-2006, the department will continue to improve access to a range of residential supports. The re-design and enhancement of two programs, Alternative Family Support and the Independent Living Support Program, will continue in 2005-2006.

A new measure, percentage of adult clients with disabilities receiving support services who remain at home with their families, was introduced in the 2005-2006 Business Plan. This

new measure focuses on achieving the outcome of *better meeting the individual support needs of clients and their families through the provision of support services at their own homes*. In 2005-2006, a reporting mechanism for tracking and monitoring the number of clients in the Direct Family Support Program will be developed and implemented.

7.2 Core Business Area: Family and Children Services

The focus of Family and Children's Services is the provision of safe and nurturing environments for children to enable them to develop to their full potential. A broad range of community-based, prevention-oriented supports for both children and families is available. Two key outcomes are:

- *a stable placement for children in care*
- *better meeting the early childhood development needs of children.*

The presence and opportunity for appropriate experiences in the early years in the home, the care environment, and the neighbourhood can promote optimum development in all areas - learning, language, social, emotional, behavioural, and physical.

Performance Measure: Number of Children Placed in Facilities Outside the Province

One of the functions of this core business area is to provide quality care for children in the care of the Minister pursuant to the *Children and Family Services Act*. Children come into care when circumstances in their home environment put the child at risk of abuse or neglect. It is the department's responsibility to ensure that children's needs are met while they are in care, that there is a case plan for every child in care, and that children reside in safe, stable placements. The primary placements for children in care are foster care, licensed residential child-caring facilities, and adoptive homes.

What does this measure tell us?

The measure tells us how many children in care with emotional and behavioral problems have been placed in specialized treatment facilities outside the province. With fewer moves there is less emotional stress for children and a decrease in the associated fiscal costs necessary to meet the increasingly complex needs that may arise as a result of frequent moves.

Where are we now?

In 2004-2005, the number of children placed in specialized treatment facilities outside the province was 20. This is the fewest number of children in care outside the province in comparison to data over the last seven years.

The target for 2004-2005 was to decrease the 2001-2002 base year number of 29 by 15% to 25 children. Actual results showed a 31% reduction in the number of children placed in specialized treatment facilities outside the province. 2004-2005 was the first year that the secure-care program at the Wood Street Centre in Truro was fully operational. This contributed to the reduction in the number of children being sent out of the province.

Where do we want to be?

The department will continue to focus on providing stable placements for children in care. Two new related measures introduced in the 2005-2006 Business Plan will provide important information regarding children in care requiring stable placement:

- percentage of Nova Scotia children in care and custody (per 1,000 children under 19 years of age).
- percentage of children that come into care and custody of the total number of children receiving protection services.

In 2005-2006, the department will be implementing *Children in Care and Custody Standards* which will emphasize comprehensive planning for children; and exploring and developing alternative services such as family group counseling, outreach services from residential facilities, mediation, respite, family preservation and reunification and in home services. Community Services will also be developing and delivering a communications strategy focusing on increasing public awareness regarding child welfare, prevention and alternative programs.

Performance Measure: Number of Children in Permanent Care Placed for Agency Adoption

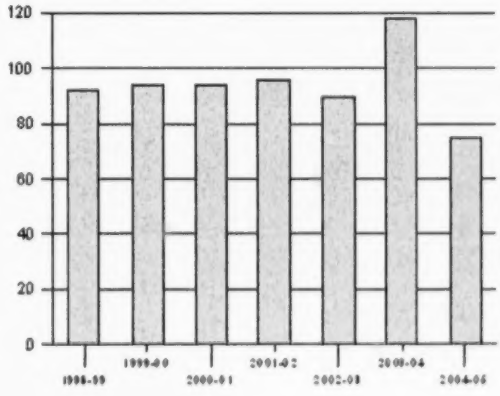
Where a child is in permanent care and custody and legally free for adoption, it is in the child's best interest to be placed for adoption. Research has shown that a secure stable family environment is an important factor in healthy child development.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure provides a further indication of the stability of placement for children in care. The number of children in permanent care and custody placed for agency adoption is calculated as of the end of the fiscal year. It does not include the number of agency adoptions in progress.

Where are we now?

Data over the past seven years shows variations in the number of agency adoptions, ranging from a high of 118 agency adoptions in 2003-2004 to a low of 75 in 2004-2005. Seventy-five agency adoptions represents a 21.9% decrease from the base year (2001-2002) figure of 96 children. The target for 2004-2005 was to increase the number of agency adoptions of children in permanent care and custody by 10% over the base year.



Where do we want to be?

In 2005-2006, Community Services will be improving the domestic adoption process by adding 10 staff positions along with implementing changes to domestic adoption service delivery as a result of consultations that were completed with stakeholders in 2004-2005. Community Services will also be examining barriers to adoption and foster care by identifying agency and jurisdictional barriers to service with the goal of increasing client access to adoption and foster care services. The department aims to increase the number of agency adoptions to the level achieved in 2003-2004.

Performance Measure: Number and Percent of Trained Providers in Licensed Full Day Early Childhood Child-Care Centres

One of Nova Scotia's Early Childhood Development strategies is to improve the quality of care offered by child-care providers. Evidence shows that appropriate training and education have a direct relation to the quality of child-care and to positive child development outcomes. People who have specialized education in early childhood development tend to be more responsive with children and better able to provide them with stimulating activities that are appropriate to their development level.

What does this measure tell us?

The measure indicates the number and percentage of child-care providers in licensed full-day early childhood child-care centres who have appropriate training as set out in the *Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations*.

Where are we now?

As of March 31, 2005, 982 (full-time equivalent funded staff) or 87% of child-care staff had attained the training level set out in the *Nova Scotia Day Care Act* and *Regulations*. The data for the past four years shows a steady increase in the number and percentage of trained child-care staff. Since 2002, the base year, there has been a 16.2% increase in the number of trained child-care staff. This exceeds the requirement of the *Nova Scotia Day Care Act Regulations* that require two-thirds of the staff in licensed child-care facilities have training in early childhood education or its equivalent.

Number & Percentage of Trained Child-Care Providers			
2002 (Base Year)	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**
81%	84%	85%	87%
845 FTEs	914 FTEs	966 FTEs	982 FTEs

Where do we want to be?

The goal is to maintain the percentage of trained child-care providers at 85% or higher. In 2005-2006, the department will continue to provide support for training opportunities in the early childhood education field and monitor the implementation of training standards.

Performance Measure: Number of Full-Time Licensed Child-Care Centres & Number of Spaces in Full-Time Licensed Child-Care Centres

In accordance with the *Nova Scotia Day Care Act* and *Regulations*, the department is responsible for the licensing of child-care centres. Access to child care is an important resource for parents of young children who are pursuing training or employment. Licensing is one way the department ensures there is quality child-care.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of licensed full-time child-care centres and the number of spaces in them are measures of the department's ability to *meet the early childhood development needs of children*. Quality child-care offers an ongoing opportunity for children's learning while providing safe and reliable care that promotes socialization, health, and a child's well-being.

Where are we now?

The department's target was to maintain the number of full-time licensed child-care centres in the province, and achieve an increase of 5% in the number of available spaces. While the number of licensed centres decreased slightly in 2004-2005, the number of spaces in these centres increased.

The results in comparison in 2003 are quite favourable. Since 2003, the number of licensed full-time child-care centres has increased by 12.7%. Over the course of the same period, the number of child-care spaces has increased by 10.2% or 859 additional spaces.

Number of Full Time Licensed Child-Care Centres & Child-Care Spaces[3]

Year	2003	2004	2005	% Change (2003 to 2005)
Centres	197	233	222	12.7%
Spaces	8,439	9,243	9,298	10.2%

Where do we want to be?

The department is working toward increasing both the number of spaces available and the number of full-time licensed child-care centres in the province. By April 2006, the department plans to expand the number of spaces in full-time licensed child-care centres by 350 to 9,650 spaces; an increase of almost 4%. By April 2007, the goal is to have 240 full-time licensed child-care centres; an increase of 3% in comparison to the 2004 base year[4]. In 2005-2006, through funding from the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Childcare:

[3]In the 2004-2005 Business Plan, the numbers were based on January and February data. For consistency, these numbers are now all based on April data.

[4]In the 2005-06 Business Plan, the base year was changed to 2004.

- non-profit child care centres will be able to apply for a Child Care Centre Expansion Grant to increase full-day child care spaces

- private child care centres will be able to apply for a Child Care Centre Expansion Loan to increase full-day child care spaces.

The department will also be conducting a series of public consultations on the development of a five year plan for child care. The vision, principles and goals are set out in the *2005 Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care.*

7.3 Core Business Area: Housing Services.

Housing is a basic need, fundamental to personal well being, and the base upon which to build healthy and sustainable communities. Housing Services provides safe affordable housing to people across the province and uses its existing buildings, and its technical and financial resources to support communities. The key result desired is *to ensure that more households in Nova Scotia have access to safe, appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing.*

Performance Measure: Number of Homes Upgraded Through Home Repair/Home Adaption Programs

The department's home repair programs help low-income Nova Scotians to maintain their homes in a state of good repair and reduce the incidence of poor housing; improving the lives of its occupants.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure includes the total number of units improved or acquired in the following programs:

- Small Loans Assistance
- Family Modest Housing
- Seniors Assistance
- Emergency Assistance
- Access-A-Home
- Suite of Residential Rehabilitation Assistance (RRAP) Programs
- Home Preservation Program

Where are we now?

In 2004-2005, the department provided assistance to 2,678 households; an increase of 6% or an additional 152 households in comparison to 2003-2004 results. This was made possible with the allocation of an additional $2.7 million to the repair/adaptation programs. In addition, the department fully implemented the new Home Preservation Program funded under the Canada/ Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement providing 72 homeowners with assistance.

Number of Homes Upgraded Through Home Repair/Home Adaptation Programs				
2000-01 (Base Year)	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
2,828	2,943	2,887	2,526	2,678

The target for 2004-2005 was to increase the number of households assisted by 50 over the 2000-2001 base year of 2,828 households. In 2004-2005, money per individual dwelling was increased in recognition of the increasing cost of repairs; the maximum assistance levels went from $12,000 to $16,000 per dwelling. This action improved the housing for the individual household assisted, but, moderately reduced the number of applicants served each year as overall program funding remains relatively constant.

Where do we want to be?

The department aims to increase the number of households assisted with their home repairs. The target for 2005-2006 remains the same as 2004-2005; that is to assist some 2,875 households with their home repairs through the full implementation of the New Home Preservation Program funded under the Canada Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement.

Performance Measure: Percentage of Public Housing Budget Allocated to Maintenance and Capital Improvement of the Province's Public Housing Portfolio

The department established a benchmark of allocating 20% of the annual public housing budget to maintenance and capital improvements. In establishing the benchmark, the department recognized that, like privately owned housing in Nova Scotia, the public housing stock is aging and there are significant maintenance issues that require a steady financial commitment in order to ensure public housing tenants live in safe and healthy housing.

What does this measure tell us?

The measure enables the department to monitor year to year performance against the benchmark of 20%. Ongoing investment in regular maintenance and improvement to the province's public housing stock of approximately 12,000 units is necessary to protect the value of these assets, and ensuring the units are safe and adequate.

Where are we now?

Actual maintenance and capital improvement expenditures[5] in 2004-2005 were 23.4% of the public housing budget. This level of expenditure enabled completion of previously deferred maintenance items. Work undertaken included interior and exterior upgrades and the installation of new generators and elevators in some seniors' buildings. The average rate of expenditures over the past four years now stands at 21.1%, exceeding the 2000-2001 base year figure of 20.33%.

Percentage of Public Housing Budget Allocated to Maintenance and Capital Improvement of the Province's Public Housing Portfolio					
2000-01	**2001-2002**	**2002-2003**	**2003-2004**	**2004-2005**	**5 Year Ave.**
20.33%	19.4%	18.9%	22.7%	23.4%	21.1%

Where do we want to be?

The department's target is to maintain the rate of investment in ongoing maintenance and improvements at a minimum of 20%. Maintaining a budget allocation at 20%, however, is an ongoing challenge for the department:

- annual federal subsidies have been capped at 1995-96 levels
- inflationary increases in operating costs such as home fuel oil, electricity, wages, and building materials exceed increases in revenues from rents.

To maintain this level of investment in ongoing repair and maintenance, the department continually looks for ways to economize on operating and administrative expenses and explore revenue generating opportunities.

[5]Maintenance and capital improvement work does not encompass aging in place initiatives such as making adaptations for frail seniors and property enhancements.

Performance Measure: Percentage of Cooperative and Non-Profit Housing Organizations that have Adequately Funded Reserves[6]

Non-profit and cooperative housing organizations provide approximately 3,100 self-contained dwelling units. It is necessary to monitor the financial stability of these organizations to ensure that they are able to continue *to provide, safe, affordable and sustainable housing.*

What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates how many cooperative and non-profit housing organizations are in a balanced financial position and have sufficient revenue to meet all expenditures. The measurement involves looking at each individual cooperative or non-profit organization's annual record of cash assets versus liabilities.

Where are we now?

Under the terms of the Social Housing Agreement, Nova Scotia administers the 3rd party agreements that the cooperative and non-profit housing organizations signed with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation when the organization received funding. The annual subsidies associated with this housing is $8.3 million. As in the past two years, 71% of the cooperative and non-profit housing organizations with which the corporation has involvement, had adequately funded reserves. Though short of the target of 75%, the financial stability of these organizations has improved significantly since 2000-2001. Factors impacting performance were the rising cost of home heating fuel, costs of repairs and maintenance, as well as other price increases.

Percentage of Cooperative and Non-Profit Housing Organizations that have Adequately Funded Reserves				
2000-01	**2001-2002**	**2002-2003**	**2003-2004**	**2004-2005**
62.5%	68%	71%	71%	71%

In 2004-2005, partnerships were strengthened with the co-operative sector to improve training and education, and to develop a co-operative network to build capacity and to increase opportunities for information exchange. The department, on behalf of the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation, also worked with individual co-operatives and non-profit housing projects to assist and train management. In addition, Community Services' staff has developed

[6]For clarity this measure was revised slightly during the 2005-06 business planning process from "financially stable" to "adequately funded reserves".

better reporting requirements and a ranking system for evaluating the financial strength of housing projects and are undertaking more physical inspections of the housing projects.

Where do we want to be?

Based on the performance of this measure over the past five years, the target set out in the corporation's 2005-06 Business Plan is to maintain the percentage at or above 71%. To achieve this target, the department will continue to work with others to provide training, to develop a cooperative network to build capacity, increase opportunities for information exchange, and work with individual organizations to assist and train management.

Performance Measure: Affordable Housing Agreement Funds Committed to Date on Creating or Renovating Housing Units

The Agreement represents an important step in support of Nova Scotians in need of affordable housing and is an important piece of the province's housing strategy.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates how much of the $37.26 million available under the Canada Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement has been committed to creating or renovating housing units in Nova Scotia.

Where are we now?

As of March 31, 2005, approximately $19 million of the available $37.26 million Phase 1 Affordable Housing Initiative had been committed by the federal government, the province and our housing partners. This involves 435 affordable dwelling homes and includes 2004-05 commitments for 178 new rental units and the rehabilitation of 72 homes under the Affordable Housing - Home Preservation Program.[7] The following table indicates the housing commitments to the end of the 2004-05 fiscal year.

[7]Section 4.0, Prioities and Accomplishments, provides further information on the progress made under the Affordable Housing Program.

Phase 1 - Affordable Housing Initiative Housing Commitments as of March 31, 2005			
Housing Projects	**Dwelling Units**		
	Home Preservation	**New Rental**	**Home Owner**
Middleton		15	
Creighton Gerrish, Halifax			6
Home Reservation 2003-4004	26		
Shoreham Seniors Village, Chester		16	
Benmar Holding Limited, Westville		4	
Wallace MacLean Holding Co., Deber		24	
Asset Management Phase 1, New Minas		24	
New Deal Development, Sydney Mines		20	
Pinto Properties, Truro		24	
Northwoodcare Incorp., Halifax		66	
Asset Management Phase 2, New Minas		24	
Affirmative Industries, Dartmouth		10	
St. Andrew's Seniors, St. Andrew's		8	
Home Preservation 2004-2005	72		
Committed Home Preservation 2005-06	96		
Total	194	235	6

Where do we want to be?

The remainder of Phase 1 funding, $18 million, will be fully commitment by the end of fiscal year 2005-2006. At the end of October 2005, $11 million of the $18 million remaining in funding was committed.

A request for proposals for new affordable housing was issued in December 2004 and generated a total of 46 submissions which was more than twice the number generated by the first request for proposals in March 2004. Over 900 units were proposed in response to a need to deliver approximately 250 units. Staff are reviewing the submissions and working with the proponents. It is anticipated that a number of new rental housing projects will be announced in the fall of 2005. These new projects will represent a major commitment in funds and achieve the program targets.

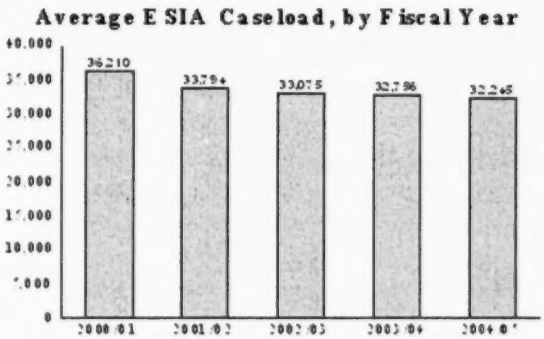
In March 2004, the department signed a supplementary agreement with the Government of Canada for Phase 2 of the Affordable Housing Agreement, worth $18.9 million[8]. This brings

[8] In future reporting documents, Phase 2 funding will be incorporated into this measure.

the total investment under the Canada-Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program Agreement to $56.18 million in funding by 2008. This investment is being equally shared by the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia and its housing partners.

7.4 Core Business Area: Employment Support and Income Assistance

The focus of Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) is to encourage and help individuals and families in their efforts to become self-reliant. Several performance measures are used to track *increases in the self-sufficiency of individuals and families.*



Over the course of the past five years, the ESIA caseload has declined from an average annual caseload of 36,210 cases in 2000-2001 to 32,245 in 2004-2005; a reduction of 11%.

This reduction in the overall number of people needing to access income assistance is a positive result for the department which the defined measures may not reflect.

Performance Measure: Percentage of income assistance recipients, who upon employability assessment, are supported to attend an educational program.

Many income assistance recipients are involved in efforts to enhance their skills and personal potential. These activities better prepare people for work and to participate in their communities. Individuals may enroll in a variety of programs including literacy and upgrading programs as well as specialized courses assisting people to acquire job-specific skills. Participation in training and employment activities gives people a chance to become more self-sufficient.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of individuals on the Employment Support Services' caseload who are participating in approved education and training programs.

In 2004-2005, 10,358 Income Assistance recipients were assessed as being appropriate to participate in Employment Support Services. Of this total, 4,947 (or 48%) participated in an approved education or training program. This represented an increase from the rates experienced in 2003-2004, 2002-2003, and 2001-2001, exceeding the 2003-2004 target to maintain the 2001-2002 base year percentage of 43%.

Some of the initiatives undertaken to achieve this target includes:

- Partnering with the Department of Education, through the Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning to ensure income assistance recipients have an opportunity to complete the adult high school diploma
- Supporting individuals to attend the Nova Scotia Community College through the Educate to Work Program
- Partnering with Work Activity Programs to provide opportunities for clients to gain skills through these programs
- Promoting and expanding One Journey Work and Learn – a partnership project which provides opportunities for skills development and direct employment to recipients of social assistance by responding to an industry skills shortage.

Where do we want to be?

The target set in the department's 2005-2006 Business Plan is to maintain the percentage at or above the 2003-2004 base year level of 43%. The department will continue to offer the above noted programs to support individuals and families in their efforts to become self-reliant.

Performance Measure: Percentage of income assistance recipients involved in Employment Support Services who have secured full or part-time employment.

Involvement in employment activities, be it full or part-time, not only reduces reliance on income assistance but also enables individuals and families to achieve a greater degree of self-reliance and independence.

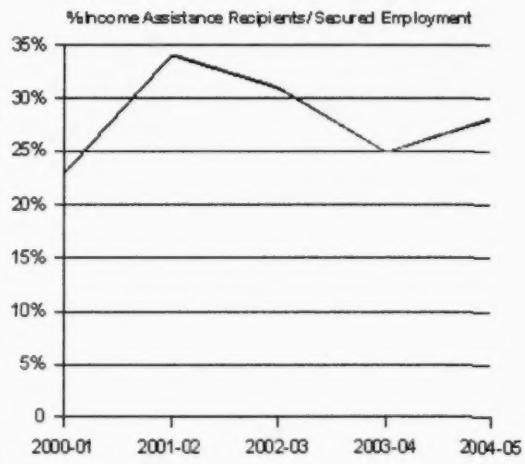
What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of individuals in receipt of income assistance, were assessed as being appropriate for involvement in Employment Support Services, and have secured full or part-time employment. The measure includes clients who are still receiving some

income assistance, but at a reduced amount because their earned wages are not sufficient to completely exit the program.

Where are we now?

In 2004-2005, 28% of the Income Assistance recipients involved in Employment Support Services secured full or part-time employment, representing an increase of 3% from the 2003-2004 rate of 25%. The target set for 2004-2005 was, however, to increase the base year percentage of 34% by 5% points.



Performance below the target was due in part to the challenges faced by current Employment Support Services caseload. Many cases display anywhere from 6 - 12 barriers to employment. These barriers may include literacy issues, changing family circumstances, disabilities and/or educational/ training gaps. Overcoming such barriers means that additional time and support is required to help these individuals make the transition into the labour force.

The table below is illustrative of one of the barriers faced by many people. It shows the highest level of educational attainment of the current ESIA caseload; for example some 64% of clients have not completed high school.

Highest Level of Education Attainment, ESIA Cases Fiscal Year 2004-2005

Educational Attainment	%
Less than Grade 9	25.1%
Grade 9 to 11	38.5%
Grade 12	24.6%
Special Education	2.7%
Vocational Training	1.8%
Trade School	1.3%
Community College	2.3%
University	3.7%

Where do we want to be?

In the 2005-06 Business Plan, the target for recipients participating in Employment Support Services that secured full or part-time employment is 25%; reflecting the current Employment Support Services caseload.

To support individuals and families in their efforts to become self-reliant, Community Services will continue to:

- provide prescription drug coverage (Pharmacare), up to one year, for recipients who leave income assistance and maintain employment
- partner with Work Activity Programs to provide opportunities for clients to gain skills through these programs
- promote and expand One Journey Work and Learn. A partnership project which provides opportunities for skills development and direct employment to recipients of social assistance by responding to an industry skill shortage.

Performance Measure: Income Assistance as a percentage of total monthly income.

Another measure of an individual or family's level of self sufficiency is their level of dependency on income assistance.

What does this measure tell us?

The measure provides an indication of income received by recipients from other sources such as wages, pensions, family support payments or employment insurance. As such, it provides an indication of the extent of dependency on income assistance. Specifically, the measure represents the percentage of income assistance payments of the total monthly household income for all income recipients.

Where are we now?

Income Assistance as a % of Total Monthly Income				
2000-01 (Base Year)	**2001-2002**	**2002-2003**	**2003-2004**	**2004-2005**
70%	73%	69%	68%	67.8%

In 2004-2005, income assistance payments represented 67.8% of the monthly income of all the individuals who were receiving income assistance. The rate has declined in each of the past three years and in 2004-2005 was approximately 2.5% below the base year figure of 70%.

The target for 2004-2005, established in 2000-2001, was to decrease the 2000-2001 base year percentage of 70% by 5%. With the exception of 2001-02, income assistance as a percentage of total monthly income has been declining; however the rate of decline is at a slower pace than forecasted, primarily because of upward pressure on financial support for special needs.

Where do we want to be?

The new target, established during the 2005-2006 business planning process, is an annual reduction of 1%. To support individuals and families in their efforts to become self-reliant, the department will continue to provide employment support programs such as:

- Pharmacare (prescription drug coverage) to recipients up to one year who leave income assistance for work
- One Journey Work and Learn provides opportunities for skills development and direct employment by responding to an industry skills shortage
- Educate to Work Program supports individuals attending the Nova Scotia Community College.

Performance Measure: Percentage of total monthly income assistance cases with wage income.

This measure provides an indication of the employment activity of clients remaining on the caseload. In some cases, clients are not ready or able to enter the labour market full time, or to secure full-time employment. Many have education and training barriers and/or health and disability issues that either limit their job opportunities, or prevent them from holding full-time employment. Nonetheless, entry into the labour market, albeit on a limited scale, is the first step for many toward achieving independence.

What does this measure tell us?

The measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients who had wage income.

Where are we now?

In 2004-2005, the percentage of income assistance recipients with wage income was 11%. The target set out in the department's 2004-2005 Plan was to increase the percentage of cases with wage income by 5% above the 2000-2001 base year level of 12%.

The number of individual receiving income assistance has declined steadily over the past decade. Those with few barriers to employment have, generally moved into the work force. Those individuals who continue to receive income assistance have one or more barriers that hinder their likelihood of obtaining immediate employment. It is more challenging to move these individuals into the work force and this is reflected in the percentage of those recipients earning wage income.

Income Assistance as a % of Total Monthly Income				
2000-01 (Base Year)	**2001-2002**	**2002-2003**	**2003-2004**	**2004-2005**
12%	10%	11%	10%	11%

Where do we want to be?

Since the rate of movement of income recipients into the work force is leveling off and those remaining have multi-barriers, moving these individuals into the work force is more challenging and takes more time. In recognition of this trend, in the department's 2005-2006 Business Plan, the target for this performance measure has been revised. The new target is maintain the percentage at or above the 2003-2004 level of 10%.

Performance Measure: Percentage of children in Nova Scotia living in low income households

What does this measure tell us?

Percentage of children in Nova Scotia under 18 years of age who are living in households below Low Income Cut Off (LICO's after tax data as determined by Statistics Canada).

Where are we now?

Persons Under 18 Years of Age in Low Income Households[9]		
Year	Number of Children <18 in Low Income Households	% of Children <18 in Low Income Households
1999	24,000	11.8
2000	25,000	12.5
2001	26,000	13.3
2002	25,000	12.7
2003	26,000	13.9

Where do we want to be?

The department will continue to pursue ways to assist people on income assistance find and maintain employment that provides an opportunity to increase overall household income. It must be recognized, however, that household incomes are affected by many factors, many of which are beyond the mandate and control of Community Services[10], for example economic activity and wage rates, which require broader government input.

Effective October 1, 2005, Employment Support and Income Assistance allowances will increase. In addition, the department will be completing its evaluation of Employment Support Services and the child-care subsidy review. These initiatives will help inform future program development to ensure that families and their children have opportunities to increase their income earning potential.

[9] Statistics Canada, Income in Canada, 1980-2003, Cat. No. 13F0022XCB

[10] Therefore, this information will be included as an appendix in future accountability reports.